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Response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals

The role of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic in monitoring the future Sustainable Development Goals

Note by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

Summary

The paper presents the preparations of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic to monitor Sustainable Development Goals and promote the use of official statistics to monitor sustainable development policies.

The paper is presented for discussion to the first session of the Conference of European Statisticians' seminar "Response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals".

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I. Introduction

1. In light of the discussions on the indicators related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Post-2015 Development Agenda and Data revolution, the following provides some information on activities carried out in Kyrgyzstan.

2. The Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), approved in 2000 by the members of the United Nations, determined development priorities and indicators for the period up to 2015. For Kyrgyzstan, the monitoring of MDGs mostly required the development of specific measures and designing national indicators of sustainable development.

3. Today, Kyrgyzstan actively builds and strengthens the democratic state to ensure sustainable development, overcome historic challenges and prevent new risks.

4. Therefore, upon the initiative of the President of Kyrgyzstan, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic was developed for the period 2013-2017. The National Council for Sustainable Development is chaired by the President of Kyrgyzstan, the Coordinating Council for Cooperation with the Development Partners of the Government of Kyrgyzstan and other senior decision-making officials involved in the processes of capacity building, strengthening the role of regional institutions in the development and progress of MDGs and promotion of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

5. In December 2013, the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan approved the "Programme and the Plan for transition of the Kyrgyz Republic to Sustainable Development for 2013-2017". This Programme became an integral part of the national policy for sustainable development of the country, as stated by the President of Kyrgyzstan. The OECD Green Growth indicators have been approved by a Decree of the Kyrgyz Government as system for monitoring of the Programme for 2013-2017. The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic is a key provider of data to the system (49 indicators out of 65 are produced by the National Statistical Committee)).

6. National strategic documents are an essential tool for implementing sustainable development goals, including the achievement of MDGs and widely discussed goals relating to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Principles of sustainable development have been integrated into national policies and programmes with a focus on strengthening the economic, environmental and social aspects, and ending the loss of natural resources. For example, the National Statistical Committee (NSC) of the Kyrgyz Republic developed and approved the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, where indicators of sustainable development are a cross-cutting element in the implementation of all activities mentioned in the Strategy including development of a System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

II. Lessons learned from MDGs as a basis for SDGs

7. Today Kyrgyzstan, as a participant of the Millennium Declaration, among other countries, is at the stage of assessing achievements, risks and challenges which may hinder the progress of MDGs. Participation of Kyrgyzstan in the MDG process allowed to accumulate over 15 years of practice on forming partnerships both domestically and internationally.

8. The mentioned strategic documents reflect the level of achieving MDGs. In addition, the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) emphasizes the commitment to achieving the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

9. For evaluation and monitoring of the Kyrgyz Governmental Programme for transition to Sustainable Development two applications have been developed: matrix of indicators and target indicators of human development. In the matrix of indicators 12 indicators coincide with MDG indicators, whereas in the matrix of target indicators of Human Development Index 17 indicators are identical with MDGs.

III. Role of official statistics in the monitoring system

10. Participation in the monitoring of the MDGs allowed the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic to improve the methodology of household surveys to enable more efficient use of sources in the area of environment, gender and other indicators and to further adapt international standards to the local conditions.

11. NSC is the official source of information. However, no special support was provided (financial or methodological) to NSC for the monitoring of MDG indicators. The main sources of MDG indicators have become administrative data, existing statistical data, data collected through an integrated sample survey of households, the labor force survey and the population census. It should be noted that out of 45 MDG indicators, 38 are developed and produced by NSC and only 7 indicators by ministries and other agencies.

12. Important problems with data sources were identified when producing indicators in practice. For example, the population census is a good source, but it is available only once in five years.

13. It must be emphasized that extensive discussions took place to agree on common goals on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The inclusive process provided additional information for decision-makers, helped to identify challenges relying on the collective wisdom of society. This enables the implementation of the ambitious Post-2015 Development Agenda in the first place.

14. There are challenges in adopting the new SGDs, such as capacity and knowledge building required within NSC and the possible increase of response burden among employees since the national statistical system is working within guaranteed government order. Otherwise the work on both MDGs and SDGs is not supported with additional financial and human resources.

15. International organizations and development partners are working with sectoral ministries and agencies on SDGs and not paying sufficient attention to NSC that would be the official source of information. But practice has shown that when preparing country reports on MDGs, only official statistical data was used.

16. Experience in monitoring of MDGs revealed the following issues that require specific attention when developing and implementing the goals and objectives of the Post-2015 Development Agenda:

(a) Firstly, a clear identification of baseline information against which progress will be measured and the goal will be set will be needed;

(b) Secondly, programmes and methodology to develop indicators needs to be a priority when aiming towards objectives of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

17. During the above mentioned consultations, the following specific measures to improve monitoring the Post-015 Development Agenda with national statistics were suggested:

(a) To invite experts of NSC, not only representatives of the ministries, to participate in trainings and seminars on SDGs and the related indicators, as statisticians' input is needed to understand the indicators to be monitored, the issues related to data sources and to identify statistical tools as well as required capacity building for good quality data provision;

(b) To agree on the methodology of compiling indicators at the official level, as definitions may differ across countries. For example, in Kyrgyzstan the concept of young people includes persons from 14 years to 28 years, whereas according to international standards persons from 15 to 24 years belong to the corresponding age group;

(c) To establish a system of databases, sources and methods for obtaining the necessary information on sustainable development.